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ABSTRACT

Examination of the interdisciplinary relationship of library science and information science has led to the development of common core curriculums for both disciplines. Educational institutions in developing and developed nations alike are increasingly planning and using integrated curriculums as a common base for educating librarians and information scientists. (EAA)

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# INTEGRATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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A useful place to begin our study of the topic might be with definitions. The ones I have chosen appear in the Unesco Guidelines for formulating policy on education, training and development of library and information personnel which was issued in December 1978 and of which the principal author was Professor Neelameghan.

Library science is defined therein as "the discipline concerned with the theory and practice of the organization of reading materials, in graphic and non-graphic form, usually available in libraries, to facilitate convenient access and productive use of them, and the management of libraries and library systems.

Information science is defined as "the discipline concerned with the study of the properties and behaviour of information, the factors influencing the flow of information, and the methods and techniques of processing information for its easy accessibility and usability at reasonable cost. It is an interdisciplinary science taking elements from and related to subject fields including mathematics, logic, linguistics, operations research, management, systems science, library science, etc."

As Professor Saunders writes in the Unesco Guidelines for curriculum development in information studies published in December 1978 and subsequently adopted by IFLA as the expression of the Organization's views on the subject,"...those responsible for professional education [have] a wider responsibility than merely producing practitioners for the situation as it is at present : a good professional school must also identify future professional trends and needs, and prepare practitioners to meet them. In other words it should lead the "field" rather than be a pale reflection of it".

Professor Neelameghan had written in 1976 in a paper for Unesco's Ad Hoc Committee on Education and Training Policy and Programme, of the need to change "the library image [to] that of a system and network of systems in which information flows rather than as a building to which one has to go for information ; changing the focus on library activity from that of a technique-centred to a user-centred and service-centred one."

A principal goal for a professional school should be "responsiveness" - responsiveness to changing user needs, to changing social needs, to changing professional responsibilities and to changing technologies.

I had occasion in the paper I prepared for the recent pre-session seminar to talk about the Information Revolution which has so profoundly altered the requirements for and the provision of information. I said that there

is a growing demand for information by an ever-wider range of users - researchers, planners, policy makers, managers, extension workers and the citizen at large. People are becoming increasingly conscious of the implication of the "information explosion". In this development, the expanding role of information technology - computers, telecommunication systems, printing and reproduction technologies is notable. But concurrently, the need for human expertise to provide the contact between user and machine is increasingly evident. There are new needs for information analysis and evaluation and for interpretative, advisory and educational services.

Some of these needs can best be supplied by the traditional techniques of librarianship. Some of them probably cannot and will call for the assistance of information scientists.

For any fully articulated discussion of the topic, we are taking up today, there is the problem presented by the lack of a standardized and agreed terminology. This can be seen in an examination of the programme of various schools which points up wide differences between individual institutions in their view of the scope and content of subjects to which they give the same name - or conversely of the different names which they give to subjects which appear to be identical.

Apart from this it now seems absolutely clear that the line of demarcation between librarianship and information science, no matter what definition one uses will become increasingly difficult to trace.

I should like to emphasize the need for schools in devising programmes, to bring out the essential and underlying unity of the various activities which contribute to the process of information transfer. It has frequently been felt that schools in the developing countries should seek to eliminate rather than perpetuate artificual distinctions such as that between "information" and "library" type activities, which have been made in the past in many parts of the developed world.

A case in point is that an important component in the study of information storage and retrieval is now the study of computer methods. It is recognized that in some developing countries the realities are such that computerized services are still some way off. Nevertheless, all students should be expected to have an understanding of the computer, its limitations and its potential in information and data storage and retrieval. This has become an indispensable extension of the field of librarianship.

The practical benefits, particularly to developing countries, of combining education and training for information scientists, librarians, and archivists as well, in the same institution has been extensively discussed

at Unesco meetings for some 10 years. It was for instance the subject of considerable debate in Working Group III of the Intergovernmental Conference on the Planning of National Documentation Library and Archives Infrastructures held in Paris in 1974. The view was expressed by some that this pattern had the great advantage of avoiding unnecessary duplication of facilities and administrative infrastructures and lessened the danger of creating psychological barriers between professional groups. Librarians, archivists and information scientists, it was argued, are all performing the social function of organizing and providing information for those who need it.

The group agreed that there existed even a common core of subjects which could be taught to the students of all these disciplines and the Intergovernmental Conference as a whole recommended that this fact be taken into consideration, at national or regional level, by countries which, for the time being, have no training facilities or need to improve the existing/limited facilities....". It added that "consideration of the question of a "common core" will certainly contribute to improving the training programmes in countries where different forms of training are currently available".

In a movement which was already well under way before that Intergovernmental Conference, a considerable number of developing countries have organized their professional education along these lines. The best known and most studied example is probably the School for librarians, archivists and documentalists, an Institute of the University of Dakar which, founded in 1963 with Unesco assistance as a training centre for librarians, has for several years operated a school with three sections which include some common studies. A similar solution has been adopted at the School of Information Science at Rabat which has had extensive Unesco assistance from the United Nations Development Fund although at present the archival programme is less developed than in Senegal. Similar patterns have emerged in Tunisia and in Lebanon. The library school of the University of Ghana had introduced information science courses into its curriculum before archival studies were added as a Regional Unesco project financed by UNDP.

A number of African schools have cited the lack of available teachers as the principal reason for further delaying the introduction of information science courses in the curriculum.

All of you will be familiar with the Regional Post Graduate Course for Information Specialists now operated in connection with the library school of the University of the Philippines. Similar patterns are developing in Japan and no doubt other Asian countries as well as in a number of Latin

The names of many North American library schools were changed some years ago to reflect related changes in the scope of their programmes.

It would appear that the integration of the teaching of librarianship and information science within the same institutions is an idea on the world scene which can no longer loom as very new even if it may remain in certain countries a controversial question.

I understand that it was decided at the Bellagio Meeting in June that the area of education and training was one where the common interests of IFLA, FID and the International Council on Archives were particularly numerous and where it is envisaged that the respective committees responsible for this area should work more closely together. This would seem to Unesco a very positive move.

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